

An Analysis of the Perceived Organizational Culture  
and Job Satisfaction of Professional Staff  
in Large Accounting Firms

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## ABSTRACT

The 'Big Nine' are seen as large accounting firms with a rigid organizational structure which can provide good training for young accounting graduates. However, the turnover in these firms has been observed to be high in recent years. This study was endeavoured to explore the current perceptions of the organizational culture of these firms by their staff, the level of job satisfaction and the mobility of their staff. Further investigation was undertaken to uncover the relationship between these factors. The effect of the personal attributes on the relationship was also part of the study.

Information about 192 professional staff in the 'Big Nine' was collected by questionnaire. It was found that professional employees perceive the firms as organizations with clear and sound structure and with responsible staff. In general, they were satisfied with their job, especially their relationship with other colleagues. However, inclination to leave was high.

A strong relationship was found between perceived organizational culture and job satisfaction. Among all the personal factors, only sex and family status had moderating effects on this relationship. The tendency to leave, on the other hand, was not strongly related to job satisfaction. The link was weak among those staff who had no strong intention to stay in public practice. Structural changes in the management policies in recruitment, salary, training, control and appraisal are suggested.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Mobility of Professional Accountants

The accounting profession in Hong Kong has experienced a steady growth over the past few years. Membership of the Hong Kong Society of Accountants increased by 11.3% while its registered students increased by 9.2% in 1987.<sup>1</sup> This reflects a continuous need for qualified accountants in Hong Kong. Many accountants work in the public accounting firms, but the majority are employed in the commercial and industrial sectors. Tertiary institutions provide education for accounting students who are required to receive on-the-job training before they can qualify. Most accounting graduates prefer to join the public accounting firms, especially the large ones. These firms can provide them with good training and needed exposure in order to qualify.

The large accounting firms are considered as the best training ground for qualified accountants, not only for those who remain in public practice, but also for those who intend to join commercial and industrial organizations at a latter date. Hence many

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<sup>1</sup> The Report of the Council 1987. Hong Kong Society of Accountants.

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young graduates join the public accounting firms with their eye on commerce and industry and will leave the firms after they have worked there for two or three years.

This does not mean that those graduates with career objectives in public practice have lower mobility. The career path in the large accounting firms is very rigid. Promotion is based not only on an individual's merits, but also on the work experience. This plays an important part in consideration for advancement within the firm. As with all types of organizations, there are fewer positions at higher levels. Hence it is not possible for all young graduates to be promoted within the same firm where they started their careers. They have to look for opportunities elsewhere.

On the other hand, the loss of well-trained staff to commercial and industrial groups as well as to other accounting firms causes a shortage of suitable in-house candidates for promotion. Recruitment from other accounting firms is then required. A survey in September, 1986 revealed that only 58% of managerial posts and 72% of supervisory posts in accounting firms were filled by promotion from within.<sup>2</sup> Although these percentages partially reflect the transfer of senior staff from overseas offices, they indicate a high mobility of professional staff in accounting firms.

#### Culture in Large Public Accounting Firms

The high turnover rates in large public accounting firms is perhaps caused by dissatisfaction of professional accountants with their work and their organizations. Yam, Li and Chia (1987) found in

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<sup>2</sup> 1986 Manpower Survey Report on Accountancy. Accountancy Training Board, Vocational Training Council.



their research that professional accountants in Hong Kong were not really satisfied with their jobs. The mean score of overall satisfaction in the survey is 3.03 on a scale from 0 to 6 with, 6 being the most satisfied. Satisfaction, in turn, may be influenced by the organizational cultures of the accounting firms and the personal attributes of the individuals.

Different accounting firms have different cultural values. However, there are some cultural values common to all accounting firms and these cultural values make them different from other commercial and industrial organizations. It is the norm among the professional accountants to work overtime on weekdays and to work on Saturdays and Sundays while this is not usual in other types of organizations.

Large accounting firms share general cultural values. In addition, they have some distinct cultural values which small accounting firms do not have. Continuing professional training is important for professional accountants. The increase in the complexity of business activities requires professional accountants to update their knowledge through continuing training and education in order to cope with the changing demand of work. It is a common policy in large accounting firms to provide this kind of in-house training. The high professional status of large accounting firms also distinguishes them from small firms. The name 'Big Nine' is given to the nine large worldwide accounting firms. They are Arthur Andersen & Co.; Arthur Young & Co.; Coopers & Lybrand; Deloitte, Haskins & Sells; Ernest & Whinney; KMG Byrne; Peat, Marwick & Mitchell; Price Waterhouse and Touche Ross & Co. The accountants who are trained by these firms are considered better and they are proud of being a member of these firms. Other cultural values such as high professional standards and rigid organizational structures differentiate these large accounting firms



from small firms.

### Objectives of the Study

The reasons why professional accountants leave the large accounting firms are varied. Some leave the firms due to their original career plans. The satisfaction of this group of people may have no significant influence on their departure. Others may leave the firms just because they do not like their jobs or organizations or both. This aroused the author's interest to carry out the present study.

The first aim of this project is to study the correlation between job satisfaction and the intention to leave. Job dissatisfaction is often considered the causal factor for leaving a job. Nevertheless, this may not be the case for professional accountants working in the large accounting firms. A lower correlation between job satisfaction and the intention to leave is expected among this group. However for those intending to stay in public practice, the correlation between job satisfaction and the intention to leave the firm but not the public practice is expected to be higher.

As part of the study, the underlying factors which leading to job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction will be investigated. Two groups of factors are considered in the study. The elements of the organizational culture as perceived are one group. The other group is personal attributes, such as age, years of experience, sex, educational level and family status. This is the second aim of this project.

The study of Yam, Li and Chia (1987) revealed that the professional accountants in Hong Kong were not so satisfied with their jobs. There was no indication with which job attributes they were dissatisfied and with which they were satisfied. In this study, both



the overall job satisfaction and satisfaction with different facets of the job will be considered. The examination of the satisfaction of different job facets is the third aim of this study.

The fourth aim is to explore how professional accountants in the large accounting firms perceive the organizational culture of their organizations. This exploratory study completes the picture of the turnover behaviour of professional accountants in large accounting firms. The elements of organizational culture included in the study are organizational structure, individual autonomy, management support, system of performance evaluation and reward, identification of the employee with the firm, conflict tolerance and risk tolerance. These elements affect the job satisfaction of professional accountants.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

The whole analysis is divided into two parts, namely, the study of the causes of job satisfaction and the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover. The causes are the perceived organizational culture elements and this causal relationship is moderated by the personal attributes of an individual. One of the consequences of job satisfaction is high turnover rate. In this study the relationship between turnover, as indicated by the intention to leave, and job satisfaction will be investigated.

#### Perceived Organizational culture

Organizational culture is a set of shared understandings held by the organization's members on how things are done and how members should behave in the organization (Robbins, 1986). Two important aspects in this definition are understanding and sharedness. Understanding depends on how the members perceive the characteristics which exist in the organization. This is a subjective perception of the organizational characteristics and individual preference does not affect such perception. Sharedness stresses that such perception should be common to all members. If understanding is only shared by a few members, this organizational culture element is weak and should have no predictive value in an individual's behaviour.



## Elements of Organizational Culture

The set of shared understandings of the organizational characteristics can be divided into seven dimensions.

### Individual Autonomy

This is the feeling of the extent to which an individual is required to be responsible for his work; the extent to which he can work independently; and the extent to which he can exercise his own initiation in carrying out his work.

### Organizational Structure

This is the feeling of the constraints and procedures in the organization and it includes rules and regulations that exist and the control over the work by means of supervision.

### Support

This is the perceived helpfulness of the superiors in the working environment and the support given by the organization.

### Identity

This is the feeling that an individual is identified as part of the organization and the importance of this kind of identification.

### Performance-Reward

This is the feeling of being rewarded for work done well. This embraces the feeling of having preset standards, fairness in reward system and equity in promotion policy.

### Conflict Tolerance

This is the feeling of the willingness of staff to get problems out into the open and how the management tolerates this.

### Risk Tolerance

This is the feeling of the degree to which staff are encouraged to take a risk which is acceptable to the management. This reflects the attitude of the management toward risk.

## Organizational Culture and Organizational Climate

Organizational culture and organizational climate are two slightly different but closely related concepts. Forehand and Gilmer (1964) defined climate as:

"the set of characteristics that describe an organization and that (a) distinguish the organization from other organizations, (b) are relatively enduring over time, and (c) influence the behavior of people in the organization."

Organizational climate, like organizational culture, is also the feeling shared by the organization's members toward a set of characteristics of that organization. The set of characteristics used in identifying the organizational climate is the same as that of the organizational culture. The only difference is that climate is less substantial and has a shorter term in comparison to culture. While culture is a significant part of climate, it has a more enduring effect (Lee, 1985). In examining the impact of an individual's feelings towards the organization of job satisfaction at a given moment in time, organizational culture and organizational climate are two interchangeable terms.

## Theories of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a personal feeling resulting from the evaluation of the job one has experienced. Different approaches have been developed to explain this feeling.

### Need Fulfillment Theory

Vroom (1964) explained that a person was satisfied if he could get what he considered important from the job. Satisfaction to each job factor was measured in terms of the degree to which the job



could provide with reference to one's need. The overall job satisfaction was the summation of his satisfaction in all job factors weighed by the importance of each factor.

In this theory, it is assumed that people are aware of what they want from the job and hence this reaction depends merely on how much they receive. However, it is argued that even a conscious person may not be able to aware of all his needs. Moreover, differences in an individual's feelings towards what he expects he should receive are ignored in this theory. People's attitude is strongly influenced by the difference in expectation. This factor is taken into account by the discrepancy theory.

#### Discrepancy Theory

Locke (1969) argued that satisfaction was a result of the difference between what the person wanted and how he perceived what he received. The smaller discrepancy between the want and the perceived outcome would result in a higher satisfaction. Porter (1961) used a slightly different version - how much a person felt he should receive instead of how much he wanted. The essence of this theory is to use the perceived outcome instead of the actual outcome received. What an individual receives has no direct effect on his satisfaction level. The actual outcome interacts with the satisfaction level through how it is perceived by an individual.

Total job satisfaction is the sum of the discrepancies in all the factors. It is argued that discrepancy has already taken the importance of each factor into account and it is irrelevant to use the weighed total. Empirical findings by Ewen (1967), Smith, Mikes and Hulin (1968), Evans (1969), Mobley and Locke (1970), Wanous and Lawler (1972), Quinn and Mangione (1973) and Kraut and Ronen (1975) support



such an argument.

However, recent findings by Scarpello and Campbell (1983) show that the sum satisfaction of all job facets is not a comprehensive indicator of overall job satisfaction as some important components may be neglected in the study.

### Equity Theory

Similar to the discrepancy theory, the equity theory uses perceived outcome as an evaluation of job satisfaction and it explains that job satisfaction results when the perceived outcome is not equitable to input. It puts emphasis on the perceived equity between input and outcome balance. This evaluation is based on a comparison with a reference group. Although this equity has not been explicitly taken into account in the discrepancy theory, there is an implied reference in evaluating what one wants or how one feels what one wants. Again overall job satisfaction in the equity theory is the sum of the satisfaction of all job factors, provided all the job factors have been included.

### Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg, Mauser and Snyderman (1959) concluded in their study that job factors could be classified as motivators (or intrinsic factors) and hygiene factors (extrinsic factors). Motivators were important for job satisfaction but had no effect on job dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors, on the other hand, were the major causes of job dissatisfaction and could not induce job satisfaction. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction did not exist in a continuum.

Much research were carried out to study this theory. The studies of Ewen, Smith, Hulin and Locke (1966), Wernimont (1966, 1972), Dunnette, Campbell and Hakel (1967), Waters and Waters (1969), King



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(1970) and Soliman (1970) give no strong support to the two-factor theory. Most of the studies find that both the intrinsic and the extrinsic factors can be sources of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Some factors may be more important in the explanation than others; however, they all have influence.

Out of these four theories, the discrepancy theory and the equity theory are the two strongest theoretical explanations of job satisfaction. The discrepancy theory forms the theoretical base for this project. Attitude scale is adopted to measure job satisfaction in this study. This method is widely used by many researchers.

#### Job Attributes

Job satisfaction is an overall feeling to a job. A person is satisfied with his job as a result of collective evaluation of different attributes of a job. In the analysis of job satisfaction, it is desirable to understand the impact of each job attribute as well as overall job satisfaction. The following attributes are considered in the study:

- (1) Promotion
- (2) Work Itself
- (3) Use of Best Abilities
- (4) Recognition
- (5) Autonomy
- (6) Pay
- (7) Status
- (8) Development
- (9) Appraisal
- (10) Relations with Co-workers

- (11) Working Conditions
- (12) Job Security
- (13) Relations with Supervisors
- (14) Technical Supervision

The first seven attributes are variables related to the content of the job itself and the remaining seven are variables related to the context of the organization.

The impact of overall job satisfaction is also important in this study. Past studies show that the importance of each job attribute has already been reflected in the degree of satisfaction, hence it is possible to use the sum of all the scores of individual attributes as an indicator of overall job satisfaction. However, it is more desirable to have another comprehensive measure to evaluate overall job satisfaction.

#### Organizational Culture and Job Satisfaction

As both organizational culture and organizational climate measure the feelings of an individual toward the characteristics of an organization, previous studies on the impact of organizational climate on job satisfaction can be used to review the relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction.

Research studies have shown that there is a relatively strong causal relationship between perceived organizational climate and job satisfaction. Litwin (1968) carried out an experimental study and found that different organizational climates had effects on power, affiliation and achievement motivation and which in turn affected job satisfaction on different job attributes. Friedlander and Margulies (1969) reported that organizational climate was a significant determinant of individual job satisfaction and the degree of impact of



climate upon satisfaction varied with the type of climate and the type of job satisfaction. Lyon and Ivancevich (1974) had similar results in their studies among nurses and hospital administrators. Pritchard and Karasick (1973) performed a study on managers and found that climate factors related highly to overall job satisfaction.

Some researchers, like Johannesson (1973), criticized that the perceived organizational climate measured by means of self-reported questionnaires was just another measure for job satisfaction and hence should be highly correlated to job satisfaction. However, Schneider (1975) explained that climate was a perception of the situation and it was descriptive and organizationally oriented. Job satisfaction, on the other hand, implied an internal evaluation of the situation and it was affective and individually oriented. Similar explanations were given by Payne, Fineman and Wall (1976).

It can be concluded that climate, as culture, is derived from a person's description of what the organization is. Whether he likes it or not does not affect his description, that is to say no personal preference is included in this perception. Job satisfaction is the individual's evaluation of the job. This evaluation is affected by the perception of the characteristics of the organization, or perceived organizational culture.

#### Personal Attributes and Job Satisfaction

People with different backgrounds have different needs and perceptions. As job satisfaction is dependant on perceived needs, personal attributes should influence job satisfaction.

#### Education

There is a consistent negative relationship between education level and job satisfaction. Klein and Maher (1966) found that the



education level was negatively related to satisfaction with pay. Williamson and Karnas (1970) carried out a study on female clerical workers and found that college graduates had different ranking in job attributes from other female workers. The study of Seybolt (1976) supports the proposition that the level of education moderates the relationship between environmental characteristics and job satisfaction.

#### Age

Holding other factors as constant, evidence indicates that there is a generally positive relationship between age and job satisfaction. But when approaching preretirement age, job satisfaction drops with age increase. The study of Saleh and Otis (1964) reveals such a phenomenon. This is because young people have higher expectations and are more easily dissatisfied. As people get older, they become more realistic in their expectations. However, when they are approaching retirement, companies are more reluctant to give them more opportunities and this causes them to be dissatisfied.

#### Sex

There is no consistent evidence as to whether women are more or less satisfied with their jobs than men, holding other factors constant. Schuler (1975) reported the females preferred to work with pleasant colleagues while males considered pay and participation were more important. However, Brief and Oliver (1976) and Brief, Rose and Aldag (1977) found no significant difference between males and females in their preferences towards job attributes.

#### Family Status

No empirical findings which study the impact of family status



on job satisfaction can be obtained. People will lower their expectations when there is a higher family burden. Hence there is a possibility that job satisfaction is influenced by family status.

#### Experience

Experience is gained as people get older. Therefore the impact of experience should be the same as age. People with longer experience should be easier to be satisfied.

#### Tenure

Like experience, one needs to be older in order to work in the organization for a longer period. Its effect on job satisfaction should resemble those of age and working experience.

#### Level of Occupation

At different levels of occupations, feelings towards different job factors are different. Armstrong (1971) reported that job content factors such as responsibility, use of best abilities and recognition were judged more important at higher occupational levels while job context factors such as relations with co-workers, job security and working conditions were more important at lower occupational levels. Starcevich (1972) got no significant different preferences in job factors in his study on different managerial levels.

There are no strong empirical studies to support that the personal attributes have a moderating effect in the relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction. The significant influences of personal attributes on job satisfaction make the author believes the existence of such moderating effect.



### Job Satisfaction and Turnover

The relationship between job satisfaction and turnover has often been studied. Vroom (1968), after examining a number of previous studies, concluded that there was a consistent relationship between job satisfaction and turnover. Hulin (1968) tried to reduce clerical employee turnover by improving their job satisfaction and it proved to be successful. Porter and Steers (1973) showed job satisfaction was inversely related to turnover. However, the correlation between job satisfaction and turnover, though it is significant, is not very strong. This is because the act of leaving an organization is caused by both dissatisfaction of the job inside and attractiveness of the alternatives outside the organization. This suggests that there should exist a higher correlation between turnover and job satisfaction in times of economic prosperity.

Hellriegel and White (1973) carried out research on certified public accountants in America and concluded that the responses to the job attributes were less favourable among those who had changed their jobs than those who had not.

Mobley (1977) developed a model to explain the relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover. He established several links between job satisfaction and the act of quitting. The thought of quitting is the next step when one experiences job dissatisfaction. The employee then has to evaluate the cost of quitting, search and evaluate the alternative before making a decision to quit. The intention to quit will be crystallized when he makes up his mind. This would explain the not too strong correlation between job satisfaction and turnover. This model was tested and supported by the studies of Mobley, Horner and Hollingsworth (1978) and Miller, Katerberg and Hulin (1979).



Arnold and Feldman (1982) conducted research on professional accountants and found that there was a significant positive relationship between turnover and the intention to leave, although this relationship was lower than the relationship between turnover and the intention to search. In the same study, job satisfaction was proved to be significantly negative correlated with the intention to leave and the intention to search. The correlation between job satisfaction and the intention to search was found to be higher than the correlation between job satisfaction and the intention to leave. This suggests that the related variable operating between job satisfaction and turnover is the intention to search.

In this research the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover among professional accountants in the large accounting firms are investigated indirectly. The intention to leave is used as a prediction of the turnover. Mobley's model indicates that there is a relationship between the intention to leave and turnover and this relationship has proved to be significant in empirical studies.

#### Framework of the Study

The framework of this research includes the investigation of the causal relationship between perceived organizational culture and job satisfaction among professional accountants in the large accounting firms with personal attributes as moderating variables. The examination of the relationship between job satisfaction and intention to leave completes the research framework. The diagram on the next page illustrates the theoretical framework of this research.

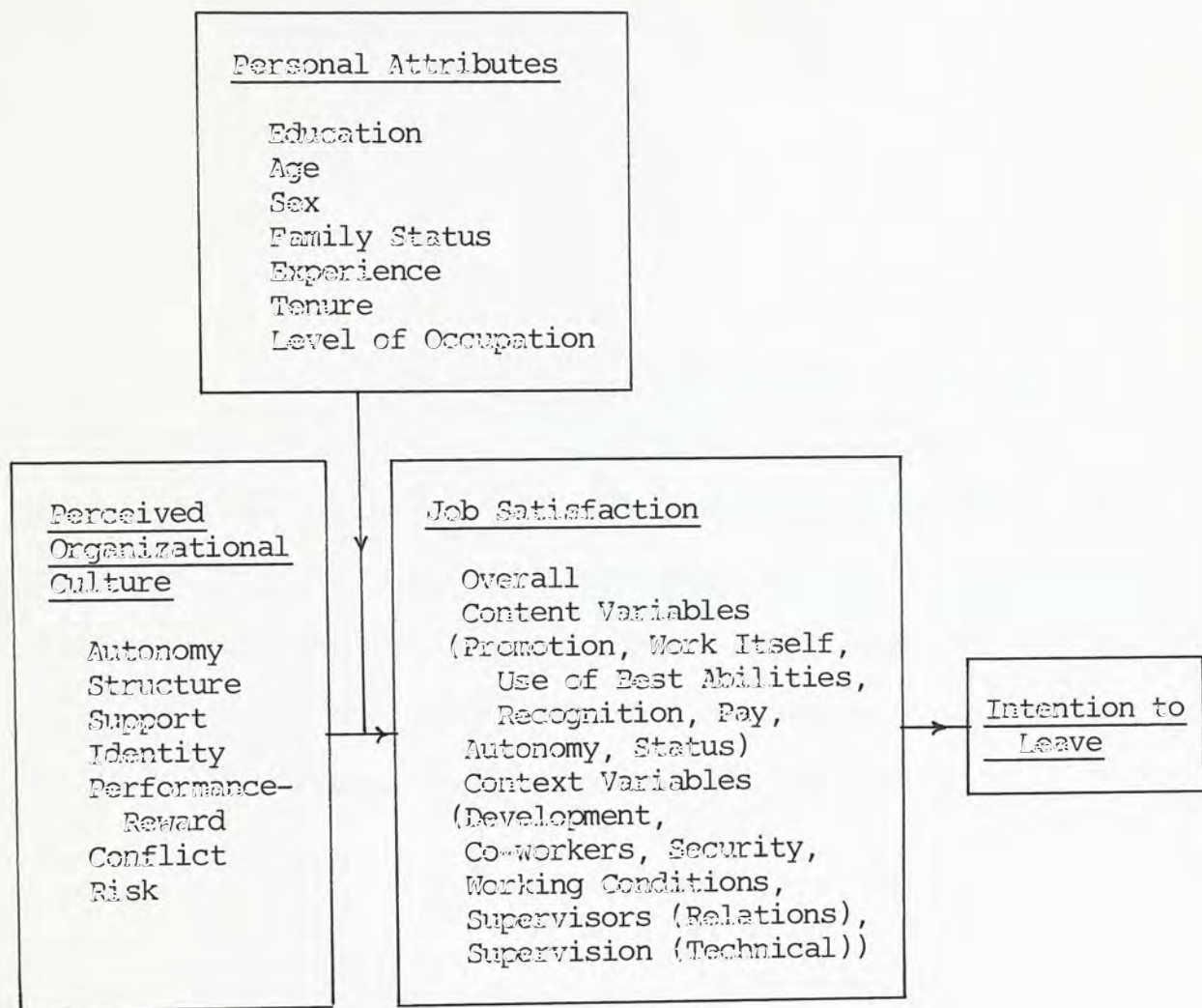


ILLUSTRATION 1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF STUDY

### Hypotheses

In this project, in addition to the exploration of the perception on the organizational culture and job satisfaction of professional accountants in the large accounting firms, the following hypotheses are formulated from the framework for examination:

- H1: There is relationship between perceived organizational culture and job satisfaction.



H2: The relationship between perceived organizational culture and job satisfaction is moderated by the personal variables.

H3: There is a relationship between job satisfaction and the intention to leave.

In the first hypothesis, the influences of different elements of the perceived organizational culture on both the overall job satisfaction and satisfaction to different job facets are tested. The effects of different personal variables on the relationship between perceived organizational culture factor and overall job satisfaction are examined in the second hypothesis. Similarly, only overall job satisfaction is employed in testing the third hypothesis.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### The Samples

The target population for this study is all the professional staff in the 'Big Nine' accounting firms in Hong Kong. The total number as estimated in 1985 was around 2,700 (Wallace, 1985). In order to have a reasonable size for each sub-sample in the examination of the demographic effects, a minimum sample size of 100 is desirable. With an expected response rate of 30%, 300 questionnaires were sent out. These samples were selected from eight of these Big Nine firms according to their relative sizes as shown in Table 1. No sample was picked up from Touche Ross & Co. since the author was not able to contact any of its staff. However, such an exclusion is not expected to have much effect on the whole analysis.

#### The Instrument Used

A questionnaire was designed to measure the variables required in this project. One staff member from each of the eight selected 'Big Nine' accounting firms was contacted in early December, 1987. He or she was given the planned number of questionnaires and was asked to distribute them among his or her colleagues of all grades. A covering letter accompanied each questionnaire explaining the purpose of the research. The respondents were instructed to return the completed questionnaire by direct mail in the self-addressed envelope



or through the staff named in the letter before January 10, 1988. Personal follow-up actions were carried out by those selected representatives in each firm. The respondents were given a month to complete the questionnaire because December was the peak season in accounting firms. Copies of the questionnaire and covering letter are attached as appendices I and II.

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

<u>Firm</u>	<u>Estimated Number of Professional Staff in 1985</u>	<u>Number of Questionnaires</u>
Arthur Andersen & Co.	140	20
Arthur Young & Co.	180	25
Coopers & Lybrand	300	40
Deloitte, Haskins & Sells	200	25
Ernest & Whinney	253	35
KMG Byrne	200	25
Peat, Marwick & Mitchell	550	65
Price Waterhouse	500	65
Touche Ross & Co.	300 *	65
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Total	2,623	300
	=====	===

\* Before it broke away from the local firm Kwan, Wong, Tan & Fong.

The response was unexpectedly good. 198 questionnaires were returned either by mail or through the representatives in each firm. This exceptionally high response rate of 66% was due to the consistent personal follow-up efforts exerted by these representatives. Out of 198 questionnaires, 6 were discarded as the respondents missed most of the demographic information. 192 samples were left in the study. These samples have a fair distribution in different personal attributes. The profiles of the samples are given in appendix III.

## Variables

The questionnaire was divided into four parts and each part was designed to measure one set of variables. There were four sets of variables included in the study. They were the variables measuring the perceived organizational culture of the large accounting firms, the job satisfaction level, the intention to leave and the personal backgrounds of their professional staff.

### Organizational Culture Variables

The first part of the questionnaire was designed to measure the organizational culture variables. The variables employed in this study are grouped as follows:

	<u>Question in the Questionnaire</u>
(1) Organization Structure	
(a) CHANNELS for opinions	A3
(b) CONSIDERATIONS of opinions	A4
(c) Clear STRUCTURE	A5
(d) UNDERSTANDING OF structure	A6
(e) Close SUPERVISION	A7
(f) Many REGULATIONS	A8
(2) Individual Autonomy	
(a) RESPONSIBLE Staff	A1
(b) Own DISCRETION	A2
(c) CHANNELS for opinions	A3
(d) CONSIDERATIONS of opinions	A4
(3) Management Support	
(a) CHANNELS for opinions	A3
(b) CONSIDERATIONS of opinions	A4
(c) Superiors' SUPPORT	A9



(d) Adequate TRAINING	A10
(4) IDENTIFICATION with the firm	A11
(5) Performance-Reward System	
(a) Adequate TRAINING	A10
(b) Equitable REWARD	A12
(c) PROMOTION	A13
(d) Preset STANDARDS	A14
(6) Conflict Tolerance	
(a) Open DISCUSSION	A15
(b) CONFLICTING opinions	A16
(7) RISK Tolerance	A17

Some of the variables reflected two to three aspects of cultural factors. The variables 'Channels' and 'Consideration' indicated the upward communication structure in the organization as well as the flexibility for an individual to exercise his initiation. In addition, they also reflected the support given to the staff by the management. The variable 'Training' showed both the support in staff development given by the management as well as the nonmonetary reward the staff received.

#### Job Satisfaction Variables

The variables related to the level of job satisfaction were measured in part B of the questionnaire. They were categorized into two main groups, namely the attributes related to the content of the job and the attributes related to the context of the organization. As it was not possible to ascertain whether the attributes were comprehensive enough to cover every aspects of job satisfaction, an additional variable measuring the overall job satisfaction was

incorporated in this part.

The job attributes in each category are as follows:

	<u>Question in the Questionnaire</u>
(1) Job Content	
(a) PROMOTION	B1
(b) WORK NATURE	B11
(c) Use of ABILITY	B5
(d) RECOGNITION	B2
(e) PAY	B8
(f) AUTONOMY	B4
(g) STATUS	B12
(2) Organizational Context	
(a) DEVELOPMENT	B3
(b) APPRAISAL	B13
(c) CO-WORKERS	B6
(d) SECURITY	B9
(e) Working CONDITIONS	B7
(f) SUPERVISION (Technical)	B10
(g) SUPERVISORS (Relations)	B14
(3) OVERALL Job Satisfaction	B15

#### Intention to Leave Variables

Part C was designed to measure the mobility of the professional staff. There were two variables. One was the overall intention to leave the organization no matter whether staff wanted to stay in public accounting firms or not. For those who answered question one in this part, the score of this question was used for this variable. Those respondents, who were intending to leave the present organization but wanted to stay in public practice, answered both



questions one and three of this part. In this case, the score of question three was the score for this variable.

The other variable was the intention to leave the organization while wanting to stay in public accounting firms was desired. Respondents who answered question three of part C were selected for this analysis.

#### Personal Attributes

The last part which included questions on the respondent's educational background, age, sex, family status, length of service in the accounting firm, length of service in the present firm and rank was devised to classify the samples into groups so that the demographic effect on the relationship between the organizational culture and job satisfaction could be examined.

#### Measurement

The scale of measurement employed all through the questionnaire, except for the questions on personal attributes, was an eleven-point Likert rating scale ranging from 0 to 10. In measuring the organizational culture, 0 means the respondent strongly disagrees with the statement and 10 means he strongly agrees. In the job satisfaction measurement, 0 represents total dissatisfaction on the part of the respondent while 10 means total satisfaction. In the scale for intention to leave, 0 means the respondent will definitely leave within three years while 10 means the respondent will definitely stay for three years. Such a scale was adopted because a score of 10 usually represents a perfect situation and a rating out of 10 is easy for the respondent to make.

One of the aims of this project is to reveal the effect of personal attributes in the causal relationship between the



organizational culture and job satisfaction. The samples were grouped according to personal background for this analysis. The principle in the groupings is to maintain enough samples in each group.

Three groups were made with regard to education. Respondents with postgraduate education were grouped with those with university education. The other two groups were the respondents graduated from polytechnics and colleges and the respondents without post-secondary education. These three distinct groups had different educational backgrounds. The accounting education in the polytechnics is more professionally oriented while the universities lay more emphasis on academic aspects. Graduates from these institutions are different from secondary school leavers.

In the classification of age groups, respondents below the age of 25 formed one group. The other group consisted of those aged 25 or above. This grouping is based on the grounds that most accounting graduates would have gained the three years experience required for a qualified accountant at the age of 25. Similarly, this guideline of three years was used in the grouping of length of service in accounting firms. With regard to family burdens, single respondents made up one group while the remaining formed the other group.

People with different ranks have different perceptions. However, in this study, three groups were made, namely the managerial/supervisory group, the senior group and the junior group. The first group included all staff ranked supervisor or above. All the seniors and semi-seniors were grouped in the second group. Staff ranked junior or below were in the last group.

### Analysis

Statistical analysis was employed in this research. Computer



software packages SIGSTAT and SAS were used. The former one was used mainly to verify the internal reliability of the factor analysis of the variables of organizational culture while the latter one was used to carry out all the other analyses.

Means and standard deviations were used to give a picture of the current perceived organizational culture of the large accounting firms, the present job satisfaction level and the intention to leave of their staff. The organizational culture variables were factorized by means of factor analysis. Five factors were extracted based on the minimum eigenvalue criterion. The respective Cronbach's alpha coefficients were obtained by the SIGSTAT program to highlight the internal reliability of these factors.

The first hypothesis was examined by studying the correlations between the organizational culture variables and the job satisfaction variables. In addition, a stepwise multiple regression was carried out between the overall job satisfaction as the dependent variable and the factors of organizational culture as independent variables.

Similarly, the correlation between job satisfaction and intention to leave the organization was used to identify the relationship between these two. Multiple regression was employed to show the extent the intention to leave was affected by the overall job satisfaction. These two statistical analyses were used to test the second hypothesis. These analyses were also performed on those respondents who intended to leave the organization but intended to stay in public practice.

Basically, multiple regression was used to examine the demographic effects on the relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction. For each personal attribute, two regression

models were set up. One was the complete model. The independent variable in this model included the most significant organizational culture factor, variables representing the personal attributes and their interactions. The variables of personal attributes had the values either 0 or 1. The other was the reduced model which was formed by excluding the variables of the interactions from the complete model. The significance of each personal attribute was tested by the null hypothesis of parallelism of the two regression lines. General Linear Models (GLM) procedure of the SAS programs was used to carry out the regressions. Different personal attributes were put into the analysis separately.



CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Perceived Culture of Large Accounting Firms

Each cultural element has two dimensions. One is the understanding of the element and this has a value from low to high. The other is the sharedness of that value among members of the organization. The low-to-high values are shown by the average scores of the organizational culture variables while the standard deviations reflect their sharedness. These basic statistics of organizational culture and their respective ranks are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2 MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATION  
OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE VARIABLES

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Stdev</u>	<u>Rank</u>
CHANNELS (A3)	6.22	9	2.13	12
CONSIDERATIONS (A4)	5.09	14	1.87	7
STRUCTURE (A5)	8.22	1	1.68	4
UNDERSTANDING (A6)	6.97	6	1.59	3
SUPERVISION (A7)	7.17	3	1.79	6
REGULATIONS (A8)	7.00	5	1.94	8
RESPONSIBLE (A1)	7.73	2	1.34	1
DISCRETION (A2)	6.71	7	1.78	5
SUPPORT (A9)	6.65	8	1.58	2
TRAINING (A10)	7.08	4	1.98	9
IDENTIFICATION (A11)	6.17	10	2.29	15
REWARD (A12)	4.69	16	2.39	16
PROMOTION (A13)	5.07	15	2.17	13
STANDARDS (A14)	5.93	11	2.06	10
DISCUSSION (A15)	5.79	12	2.09	11
CONFLICT (A16)	5.74	13	2.18	14
RISK (A17)	4.64	17	2.57	17

Results of factor analysis of the organizational culture variables are summed up in Table 3. Based on the criterion that the minimum eigenvalue is at least one, five factors are retained, namely 'Communications and Support (CS)', 'Reward and Identification (RI)', 'Autonomy and Structure (AS)', 'Professionalism (PM)' and 'Risk (RK)'.

TABLE 3 FACTOR LOADING MATRIX OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE FACTORS

Variables	Organizational Culture Factors				
	CS	RI	AS	PM	RK
CHANNELS (A3)	0.678	-	0.384	-	-
CONSIDERATIONS (A4)	0.550	-	-	-	-
STRUCTURE (A5)	-	-	0.559	-	-
UNDERSTANDING (A6)	-	-	0.662	-	-
SUPERVISION (A7)	-	-	0.424	0.615	-
REGULATIONS (A8)	-	-	-	0.778	-
RESPONSIBLE (A1)	-	-	0.670	-	-
DISCRETION (A2)	-	-	0.746	-	-
SUPPORT (A9)	0.641	-	-	-	-
TRAINING (A10)	-	0.402	-	0.593	-
IDENTIFICATION (A11)	-	0.773	-	-	-
REWARD (A12)	-	0.889	-	-	-
PROMOTION (A13)	0.378	0.703	-	-	-
STANDARDS (A14)	0.562	0.550	-	-	-
DISCUSSION (A15)	0.829	-	-	-	-
CONFLICT (A16)	0.795	-	-	-	-
RISK (A17)	-	-	-	-	0.920
Variances Explained (Eigenvalue)	3.244	2.663	2.320	1.780	1.061
Internal Consistency Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient)	0.853	0.825	0.736	0.624	N.A.
* Loadings less than 0.35 are dropped.					

Level of Job Satisfaction

Table 4 indicates the mean satisfaction score of each job attribute and the mean score of overall job satisfaction. Standard deviations are also presented to show the dispersion.



TABLE 4 MEAN SCORES AND RANK OF  
JOB ATTRIBUTES

<u>Job Attribute</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Stdev</u>
PROMOTION (B1)	6.04	9	2.01
WORK NATURE (B11)	6.24	8	1.90
ABILITY (B5)	6.56	6	1.83
RECOGNITION (B2)	7.50	2	1.76
PAY (B8)	4.48 *	13	2.55
AUTONOMY (B4)	5.78	12	1.83
STATUS (B12)	7.03	3	1.82
DEVELOPMENT (B3)	6.97	4	1.82
APPRAISAL (B13)	5.90	11	1.91
CO-WORKERS (B6)	7.61	1	1.61
SECURITY (B9)	5.98	10	2.05
CONDITIONS (B7)	4.29 *	14	1.74
SUPERVISION - T (B10)	6.35	7	1.57
SUPERVISORS - R (B14)	6.68	5	1.68
OVERALL Job Satisfaction	6.10		1.68

\* Scores below 5.

#### Organizational Culture and Job Satisfaction

The correlations between organizational culture variables and satisfaction of job attributes as well as the overall job satisfaction are summed up in appendix VI. Nearly all the correlations are positive. Significant correlations with a value greater than 0.3 or less than -0.3 are extracted and shown in Table 5.

From this table, it can be observed that the most significant organizational culture variables which are related to the satisfaction level of most job attributes are Training, Identification, Reward, Promotion and Standard. These variables are contained in the factor 'Reward and Identification'. Correlations which are not statistically significant are shown in Table 6. Structure, Regulations, Risk and Responsible are considered as insignificant organizational culture variables contributing to job satisfaction.

TABLE 5 SIGNIFICANT CORRELATIONS BETWEEN JOB SATISFACTION  
AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE VARIABLES  
( $R > 0.3$  or  $R < -0.3$ )

<u>Job Attribute</u>	<u>Related Organizational Culture Variables</u>
PROMOTION (B1)	PROMOTION*, Consideration, Identification Reward, Standard, Discussion
WORK NATURE (B11)	Training, Identification, Reward, Promotion, Standard, Conflict
ABILITY (B5)	Training, Identification, Standard
RECOGNITION (B2)	IDENTIFICATION*, Responsible Consideration, Training, Reward Promotion, Standard, Conflict
PAY (B8)	IDENTIFICATION*, REWARD*, Consideration Promotion, Standard
AUTONOMY (B4)	Discretion, Consideration, Support Training, Promotion, Standard, Conflict
STATUS (B12)	Discretion, Understanding, Support Training, Identification, Reward Promotion, Standard, Discussion, Conflict
DEVELOPMENT (B3)	TRAINING*, IDENTIFICATION*, Responsible Support, Reward, Understanding, Supervision Structure, Promotion, Standard, Conflict
APPRAISAL (B13)	CONSIDERATION*, REWARD*, PROMOTION* STANDARD*, Channel, Understanding Support, Training, Identification
CO-WORKERS (B6)	Support, Promotion, Standard, Discussion
SECURITY (B9)	Promotion
CONDITIONS (B7)	Reward, Promotion
SUPERVISION - T (B10)	Supervision, Support, Training, Conflict Identification, Promotion, Standard
SUPERVISORS - R (B14)	Channel, Consideration, Support Promotion, Standard, Discussion
OVERALL	IDENTIFICATION*, REWARD*, PROMOTION* Discretion, Consideration, Support Training, Standard, Discussion, Conflict

\* Correlations have value  $> 0.5$  or  $< -0.5$ .



TABLE 6 CORRELATIONS BETWEEN JOB SATISFACTION  
AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE VARIABLES  
SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL > 0.05

<u>Job Attribute</u>	<u>Unrelated Organizational Culture Variables</u>
PROMOTION (B1)	Responsible, Regulations
WORK NATURE (B11)	Risk
ABILITY (B5)	Responsible
RECOGNITION (B2)	Risk
PAY (B8)	Responsible, Structure, Understanding Supervision
AUTONOMY (B4)	Structure, Supervision, Regulations, Risk
STATUS (B12)	Regulations, Risk
DEVELOPMENT (B3)	Regulations, Risk
APPRAISAL (B13)	Regulations, Risk
CO-WORKERS (B6)	Responsible, Structure, Supervision Regulations, Training, Identification, Reward, Risk
SECURITY (B9)	Responsible, Structure, Understanding Supervision, Regulations
CONDITIONS (B7)	Responsible, Discretion, Structure Understanding, Supervision, Support Training, Risk
SUPERVISION - T (B10)	Regulations
SUPERVISORS - R (B14)	Responsible, Regulations
OVERALL	Structure, Regulations

Results of the stepwise multiple regression of overall job satisfaction by the organizational culture variables are presented in Table 7. These support the significance of the organizational culture elements Identification, Reward and Promotion in determining job satisfaction. In addition, Discretion and Consideration also have positive correlations to overall job satisfaction.

TABLE 7 REGRESSION OF OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION  
BY ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE VARIABLES

<u>Organizational Culture Variable</u>	<u>Parameter*</u>	<u>Partial R-square</u>
DISCRETION	0.1208	0.0133
CONSIDERATION	0.0951	0.0198
IDENTIFICATION	0.1327	0.0729
REWARD	0.1413	0.0141
PROMOTION	0.2177	0.3251
Model R-square = 0.4453		
* 0.1 significance level		

Similarly, stepwise multiple regression was made between organizational culture factors and overall job satisfaction with the latter one as the dependent variable. The factor scores were transformed from the scores of the variables contained in each factor assuming they had equal weights in that factor. The results of the regression as shown in Table 8 are similar to the regression using individual elements. The most significant factor is 'Reward and Identification' which contained the cultural elements Training, Identification, Reward, Promotion and Standards.

TABLE 8 REGRESSION OF OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION  
BY ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE FACTORS

<u>Organizational Culture Factor</u>	<u>Parameter*</u>	<u>Partial R-square</u>
REWARD AND IDENTIFICATION	0.6238	0.3875
AUTONOMY AND STRUCTURE	0.1825	0.0088
PROFESSIONALISM	-0.2240	0.0140
RISK	0.0818	0.0172
Model R-square = 0.4453		
* 0.1 significance level		



### Demographic Effects

In the regression of overall job satisfaction by the organizational culture factors, the most significant factor is 'Reward and Identification'. This factor is isolated and used to examine the effects of different personal factors.

The mean square errors for complete models (SSE), the mean square errors dropped by complete models (MS) and the respective F-statistics of the two models applying different personal attributes are tabulated in Table 9. The mean square errors dropped by complete models are the further explanations contributed by the interactions of organizational culture factor and personal attributes.

TABLE 9 TEST OF THE SLOPES OF THE INTERACTION  
BETWEEN PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES (TREATMENT)  
AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE FACTOR

Personal Attributes	<u>SSE</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F value</u>	Decision <u><math>\alpha = 0.05</math></u>
Education	1.743	0.30	0.172	Not to reject $H_0$
Age	1.762	0.36	0.204	Not to reject $H_0$
Sex	1.726	6.81	3.94	Reject $H_0$
Status	1.718	7.69	4.48	Reject $H_0$
Experience	1.763	0.06	0.06	Not to reject $H_0$
Tenure	1.760	0.38	0.38	Not to reject $H_0$
Rank	1.772	0.27	0.14	Not to reject $H_0$
<p><math>H_0</math> : All slopes of the interactions are zero.  <math>H_1</math> : At least one slope is different from zero.</p>				

Statistically, there is not sufficient evidence to reject the null hypotheses of parallelism between complete models and reduced models when education, age, experience, tenure and rank are put into the models. However, there is sufficient statistical evidence to

conclude that sex and family status influence the relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction as the null hypotheses are rejected on 5% level of significance.

Table 10 presents the slopes of the complete models when using sex and family status as treatment variables. Table 11 gives the results of the multiple regression by sex groups and status groups. The results show that males and females have different job satisfaction levels given the same organizational cultural element. Similar results are obtained between single and married people.

TABLE 10 REGRESSION OF OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION  
BY ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE FACTOR  
AND (a) SEX (b) FAMILY STATUS

(a) SEX			
<u>Variable</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>t value</u>	<u>Prob &gt;  t </u>
Intercept	1.6889	3.04	0.0027
OC Factor RI	0.7791	8.22	0.0001
Sex	1.2259	1.74	0.0843
Interactions	-0.2354	-1.99	0.0484
(b) FAMILY STATUS			
<u>Variable</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>t value</u>	<u>Prob &gt;  t </u>
Intercept	2.2606	6.38	0.0001
OC Factor RI	0.6599	11.21	0.0001
Family Status	2.9590	2.28	0.0238
Interactions	-0.4525	-2.12	0.0357



TABLE 11 REGRESSION OF OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION  
BY ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURAL FACTOR  
CLASSIFIED BY (a) SEX (b) FAMILY STATUS

<u>SEX</u>	<u>Parameter of OC Factor</u>	<u>R-square of the models</u>
Female	0.7791	0.5291
Male	0.5437	0.3137
<u>STATUS</u>	<u>Parameter of OC Factor</u>	<u>R-square of the models</u>
Single	0.6599	0.4306
Married	0.2975	0.0443

Intention to Leave and Overall Job Satisfaction

Table 12 summarizes the mean scores and standard deviations of the intention to leave of all the samples. Separate figures are provided for those who are more likely to stay in public practice and for those who are less likely to stay. It can observe that professional accountants in the large accounting firms have quite high mobility, especially those who intend to leave the public practice. This group constitutes nearly half of the samples.

TABLE 12 MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS  
OF INTENTION TO LEAVE

	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Those who are more likely to stay in Public Practice</u>	<u>Those who are less likely to stay in Public Practice</u>
Number of samples	192	99	93
Mean Scores*	3.96	5.85	1.95
Standard Deviation	2.89	2.63	1.41

\* A low score means the respondent is more likely to leave.

The relationship between overall job satisfaction and intention to leave are revealed by the correlation and multiple regression. Tables 13 and 14 cover these results for all the samples as well as for the sub-samples as classified by the likelihood to stay in the public practice. There is a relationship between overall job satisfaction and intention to leave the firm. However the link is statistically weak for those who are prepared to leave public practice.

TABLE 13 CORRELATIONS BETWEEN INTENTION TO LEAVE  
AND OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION

	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Those who are more likely to stay in Public Practice</u>	<u>Those who are less likely to stay in Public Practice</u>
Number of samples	192	99	93
Correlation (r)	0.5253	0.5169	0.1531
Probability for $r = 0$	0.0001	0.0001	0.1428

TABLE 14 REGRESSIONS OF INTENTION TO LEAVE  
BY OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION

	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Those who are more likely to stay in Public Practice</u>	<u>Those who are less likely to stay in Public Practice</u>
Number of samples	192	99	93
Parameter ( $\beta$ ) for Job Satisfaction	0.9002	0.9268	0.1341
t value for $H_0: \beta = 0$	8.509	5.947	1.478
Probability for $\beta = 0$	0.0001	0.0001	0.1428



## CHAPTER V

### INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSION

#### The Current Situation

What is the level of job satisfaction of professional accountants in the 'Big Nine'? How do they perceive their organizations? Is their mobility really high as one may think? The first part of the research findings is devoted to reveal the current situation.

#### Perceived Organizational Culture

Rigid organizational structure, responsible staff, close supervision, adequate training provided for staff, the existence of many rules and regulations, and a clear understanding of one's responsibility are the strongest aspects of organizational cultures. These reflect a well-planned and structured organization with clear established guidelines for staff to follow. The idea of it being thus has long been developed in the minds of accounting graduates. These perceived strong cultural values are reflections of the realities.

Low value is obtained in risk tolerance. This does not mean that this is a weak cultural element. Low value means that the professional staff think that their organizations are less aggressive. This result is not surprising as accountants are trained to be conservative. In the colleges, accounting students are taught to be prudent in making accounting assumptions and judgement. They also

learned not to take risk in auditing clients' accounts in order to give true and fair view of the clients' business.

Auditors can be sued for their negligence and their conducts are governed by professional bodies. This prevents the accounting firms to take a higher risk in doing business. The 'Big Nine', having larger clientele, can afford to turn away business which endanger their reputation. This partially explains why accounting firms are less aggressive in doing business.

Accountants usually have sensing, thinking and judging type of character. People having this type of character enjoy using skills to solve problems and make logical decisions. They seldom use intuition and their personal relationship to make decisions. This kind of people avoid taking unnecessary risk. Their characters influence the organizations when they become the decision-makers of these organizations.

Both the equitable reward system and the objective promotion system also have low scores. The personnel managers of the 'Big Nine' always emphasize in their recruitment talks to fresh accounting graduates that monetary reward and the chance for promotion in their firms are based on individual merits. However, this is not the case in the minds of those who work in these firms. They have no strong feelings that equitable reward and objective promotion systems exist in the firms. One of the possible explanations is that they are making comparisons with those in other sectors. In reality, many professional accountants, especially those of junior grades, feel that their salaries are small in comparison with their workload. The salaries for the fresh accounting graduates in 1987 are between \$3,000 to \$5,000. This level is acceptable for fresh graduates. The feelings of inequity derive from the effort they have to spend in order to earn these



money. The demanding nature of the work makes professional staff feel that they are unfairly treated.

Weak cultural elements are those which have large standard deviations. The perceptions to risk tolerance, the existence of equitable reward system and equitable chance for promotion, in addition to having low values, have wider spreads in scores. This shows that professional staff have no common feelings towards these elements. It also reflects some cultural inconsistency among the eight accounting firms in the study.

The standard deviations of the perceptions to the existence of equitable reward system and fair chance for promotion are 2.39 and 2.17 respectively. They are large among the seventeen perceived organizational culture variables. This large distribution in feelings is understandable. People who have been promoted would feel the system is equitable while people who have not would feel otherwise. Equitable system may actually exist. The cause of the large distribution in scores is the difference in perceptions which are influenced by experience.

Elements of organizational culture are interrelated. Instead of seven dimensions as indicated by Robbins (1986), they are grouped into five factors as shown in Table 3. This classification appears to be more meaningful. 'Communications and Support' contains seven cultural characteristics of an organization. They are Channels, Considerations, Support, Promotion, Standards, Discussion and Conflict. This factor identifies the communication and management support aspects of the organization. The communication may either be upward (staff opinions) or downward (standard settings and feedback on performance), formal (within the organizational structure) or informal (by means of open discussion). 'Reward and Identification' describes



the monetary and nonmonetary reward system of the organization and the extent to which the staff are identified with the organization. 'Autonomy and Structure' signifies the initiation of the staff and rigidity of the organizational structure. 'Professionalism' covers the aspects how the organization maintains the professional standard by means of close supervision, regulations and training. 'Risk' describes the tolerance of risk by the management.

#### Level of Job Satisfaction

One of the conclusions which can be drawn from the findings is that professional accountants in large accounting firms are generally satisfied with their jobs. The level of job satisfaction of the professional accountants in the present study is found to be higher than that in the study by Yam, Li and Chia (1987). Their results show that the average level of job satisfaction of the accountants are in between totally dissatisfied and totally satisfied. The difference in the samples explains the deviation in results. In Yam's study, samples were drawn from both large and small firms while only people from the large firms are included in the present study. Staff in the large accounting firms are expected to have greater job satisfaction because these firms have better resources, a larger clientele and a better reputation as well as providing a more attractive pay, a more comfortable working environment, greater exposure and a higher quality of training.

The result shows that the relationship with the colleagues has the highest satisfaction score. The 'Big Nine' recruit accounting graduates from various tertiary institutions. These young accounting trainees are of similar age and educational background. Some of them even are secondary school classmates. In the firms, they work together



and they also study together for the professional examinations. A good friendship can easily be created. Hence, the result of high satisfaction score in the relationship with the colleagues is not surprising.

As well as the relationship with colleagues, the firms' reputation, the status of the profession and the provision of good training and development also have relatively high scores. This reflects the needs of young accounting graduates. They join the profession because it is respected by many people and large accounting firms are chosen because of their reputable training.

#### Mobility

This research shows that professional accountants are found to have a high tendency to leave the firms they are working with. The case is even worse for those who intend to leave public practice. These people are most probably those who join the firms with their career objectives in the commercial or industrial sectors. They have no strong intentions to stay in these firms for long. Once they get what they want, they will leave to work for the clients of their former employers or seek jobs elsewhere.

#### Examination of the Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were set up for this research. The findings of the research give evidence to support these hypotheses.

#### Influence of Organizational Culture on Job Satisfaction

There are interrelationships between job satisfaction facets and cultural elements. Some are strong and some are weak. However satisfaction of each job facet is at least affected by one cultural element. The strongest elements which influence satisfaction of all



job facets and which contribute most towards overall job satisfaction are the tangible rewards such as pay, chances of promotion and training provided. Even though some cultural elements have weak link to job satisfaction, it can still be concluded that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and perceived organizational culture.

#### Effects of Personal Attributes

The second hypothesis is partially supported by the research findings. Education, age, experience, tenure and rank have no moderating effects on the relationship between job satisfaction and perceived organizational culture. These findings are different from previous research. However, there are limitations in the present findings.

The difference in education levels is not significant in the samples. Another important factor is that, results in professional examinations mean much more in the accounting profession than formal education. The age difference in the samples is also not wide enough as there is no sample with pre-retirement age. Hence the effect of age has not been fully examined. Future research can be conducted in this area.

Every things are new to young accounting graduates who have not much experience. They can easily find satisfaction from their jobs. As they get more experience, they will be promoted to higher positions if they have not left. They will face new challenges such as overseas assignments and different types of jobs. At the same time, they will have clearer understandings of the firms' culture. Their job satisfaction will remain the same provided there is no change in this organizational culture. It is reasonable to find that the personal factors, like experience, tenure and rank, have no effect on the



relationship between job satisfaction and organizational culture.

However, the moderating effects of sex and family status in this relationship are profound. As shown in Table 11, the slope of the organizational culture factor is 0.7791 for females while it is 0.5437 for males. This means job satisfaction level among female professionals has a higher reaction to the cultural factor like equitable reward, objective promotion and identification with the firm. Similarly the response to this cultural factor from professionals who are still single is greater than from those who are married.

Satisfied staff are believed to be more productive and keeping staff satisfied with their jobs is important to an organization. The result of different job satisfaction to the same organizational culture factor between males and females suggests that the accounting firms should employ more women. Actually there is a tendency of increase in both female accountants and female accounting students.

#### Influence of Job Satisfaction on Intention to Leave

In this research, the correlation between job satisfaction and intention to leave is significant. The coefficient of correlation is 0.5253 which means that approximately 25% of the variance in the intention to leave is contributed by the difference in the level of job satisfaction. Although the percentage is not high, it however gives sufficient evidence to support the third hypothesis.

When the samples are divided into two groups according to their likelihood to stay in public practice, people who are less likely to stay in public practice are found to have a much lower correlation between job satisfaction and intention to leave than those who intend



to stay. The mobility of people who have their career objectives in public practice is highly affected by their job satisfaction. For people who are less likely to stay in public practice, their intentions to leave the firm cannot be predicted from their level of job satisfaction. This is exactly what the author expected.

Reasons for leaving the profession and the present employer, as indicated in the questionnaire, are summed up in appendix VII. The most common reasons for those who want to leave the profession are that they cannot bear the long working hours and the demanding work in the public accounting firms, they want to develop their careers in the commercial sectors or they want to earn more money. The work pressure comes from the control system. Professional staff in accounting firms are required to complete time sheets periodically indicating how they spend their working hours. There is a tight control on the hours spent on each job by the management. Staff are afraid to state the actual hours spent if the actual hours are more than the standard hours assigned. The work pressure also comes from the appraisal system. The staff receive appraisal after the completion of each job. This is done by the superiors who are in charge of the job. This system is good as both the strong and weak points of the staff can be reflected immediately and improvement can be made as soon as possible. Motivation can also be achieved. However, the success of the system depends of the managerial skills of the people who make the appraisal. If the superiors criticize the staff in the appraisal rather than adopt a problem-solving approach, this appraisal system will give pressure on the staff.

For those who are more likely to stay in public practice, because they have an overall higher intention to stay (5.85 in comparison to 1.95 in the other group), no strong indications for their



leaving can be drawn from the findings. However, within this group, there are 21 individuals who are less likely to stay in the present organization. Among these 21 people, most of them indicate that the reasons for their departures will probably be the bureaucratic organizational structure, limited promotion chances and the intention to emigrate from Hong Kong. These reasons are self-explanatory.

### Conclusions

On the whole, the author concludes that the first and the third hypotheses are supported by the findings in this study, whereas there is only slight evidence to give partial support to the second hypothesis. This hypothesis can be reexamined with larger samples covering a wider range in education and age.

This study provides information for the management of large accounting firms, indicating how staff members perceive the firms, the extent to which they are satisfied with their jobs and their inclination to leave these firms. Knowing the relationships between perceived organizational culture, job satisfaction and the intention to leave can help management to formulate policies to handle the problems of job satisfaction and turnover.

Perceptions are reflections of realities. The results of this study indicate large accounting firms have similar organizational cultures except in a few aspects. All of these firms have rigid organizational structures and their staff members behave conventionally, meeting firms' requirements or leaving. However, as to the reward system and risk tolerance, there are differences among firms. The salaries for young accounting graduates among the 'Big Nine' differ by 20% to 40% while the nature of the jobs is not much different. The ways each firm does businesses are also different,



4

especially with regard to taxation services and management consultancy. As a recommendation, the author suggests that the management should review their policies in recruitment, reward and promotion, and the working conditions. Moreover, these firms should look into the problem of brain drain caused by emigration.

A more careful selection of candidates with their career objectives in public practice surely reduces the overall mobility of staff. Personality testing, like Myers-Briggs type indicator, could be helpful. People having sensing, thinking and judging type of character are more suitable for the accounting profession. They may enjoy public practice and have a lower likelihood of leaving than people of other types.

Better reward and promotion policies should be set up so that there is greater equity with regard to the demanding nature of the work. Other than monetary reward, nonmonetary rewards, such as training, are also important. Most of the large accounting firms provide on-the-job training and only a few provide examination assistance programs to help young graduates sit for professional examinations. To most of the juniors, the latter type of programs is of equal importance as the former. Job rotation is a good method to give exposures to different industries for the professional staff. A broad training policy can supplement the monetary reward system.

More important is modification of the present working conditions. One of the most important reasons for professional accountants' disliking the work in accounting firms, as described in this research, is long work hours. In accounting firms, staff sometimes work overtime which is required and approved by their supervisors. In this situation, they are compensated by leave or extra pay. But in most cases, because of the tight allocation of time for



each job and the high demand from management, staff members are forced to work late at their own cost. Working overtime without pay has become the norm in the accounting firms. Improvements in some large accounting firms allow their staff to work five days a week with Saturday off during the summer when the workload is light. This is definitely a step forward in reducing the level of work tension among professional accountants. It is not possible to change the seasonal fluctuations of the workload in accounting firms, especially in audit divisions. However, management should try to establish a reasonable allocation of time for each task in order to minimize the no-pay overtime work. A better solution to the work pressure is modification of the control systems. Staff members should be assigned on a job basis instead of being controlled by time sheets. Evaluation should be made annually or semiannually rather than on job basis. Moreover supervisors and managers should be trained in personnel management.

Facing the '1997' issue, there is a recent trend for professionals to emigrate to other countries. The accounting profession has been affected. This problem does not appear to be so serious in this study as only 12% of the staff members who are more likely to stay in public practice will leave their present firms due to emigration. However, this reason accounts for 57% of those who may leave a firm within the group. Due to personal fears about the stability of the future of Hong Kong, people will emigrate. Accounting firms can do nothing to retain professionals who have decided to emigrate, but these firms may help these staff intending to emigrate, for example by referring them to overseas offices, with the expectation to reemploy them 2 to 3 years later after they obtain their foreign citizenship. This is one way to stabilize employment of the professional staff in the coming years. The consequences of



unpredictable turnover are more serious. It disturbs plans in recruitment, training and job assignments. Another method which can tackle the problem of turnover is to employ professional staff on a contract basis. This may not reduce mobility, but management can reasonably predict such mobility. The provision of a gratuity after the completion of the contract would be an inducement for people to stay until the contract period has lapsed.

This research has not covered all of the behavioural aspects of the perception, job satisfaction and mobility of the professional accountants in the accounting firms. There are a few areas where further research is warranted. One of the possibilities is to make comparative studies between large and small accounting firms. A large sample size could also be drawn to explain the moderating effects of personal attributes other than sex and family status on the relationship between perceived organizational culture and job satisfaction. With the help of accounting firms, work could also be done to explore the effect of job satisfaction on the performance of professional accountants.

Though this research is subject to certain limitations, it highlights the problems of job satisfaction and mobility of the professional staff in large accounting firms and indicates the possible areas where future research could be conducted.

\*\*\*\*\* END \*\*\*\*\*





THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG 香港中文大學

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工商管理學院碩士課程部  
MBA Division  
Faculty of Business Administration

學生專題研究用箋  
Student Research Projects

December 10, 1987.

TEL. 0-6352783

Contact Telephone:  
Mr. Fergus W.T. Wong  
3-397243

Dear Friends,

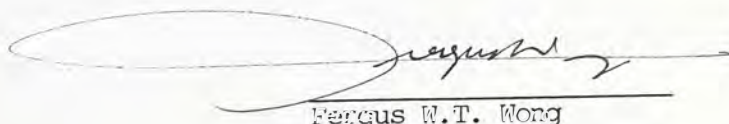
I am conducting a research into the general perception of professional accountants in large accounting firms towards their organizations. I would like to seek your kind assistance in this research.

This research is a partial requirement of the MBA degree course of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Other than fulfilling such a requirement, this research has its significance in reflecting the feelings of professional accountants in large accounting firms towards their firms and their jobs. Then remedial actions can be recommended to improve the job satisfaction of professional accountants.

In order to make this research meaningful, I need to collect information for analysis and you have been selected as one of the samples for this study. I would be grateful if you would kindly spare some time to complete and return the attached questionnaire. All information given will be kept confidential and anonymous. After the analysis, the questionnaires will be destroyed. Hence, you can assured that the information you give will not be disclosed individually. Please return the completed questionnaire to me through \_\_\_\_\_, or directly by mail in the self-addressed envelope before January 10, 1988.

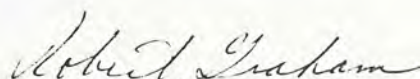
A summary of the research will be available upon request. Your cooperation in this research will be much appreciated. Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours faithfully,



Fergus W.T. Wong

Research Supervisor



Dr. Robert Graham



## Questionnaire

This is a questionnaire to collect your general feelings towards the organization you work with and your job. Your personal viewpoints are essential in your response. Please choose the answer to each question according to your own feelings and try to answer every question even if you don't have strong feeling on that aspect. Thank you.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Part A    Your perceptions of your firm

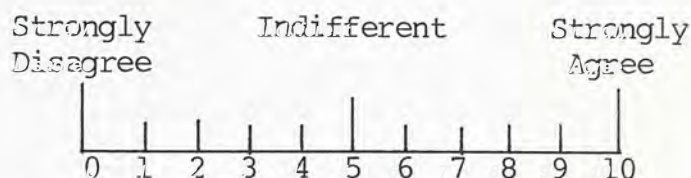
The following statements describe the settings, structure and management style which exist in your firm. Please indicate to which extent you agree or disagree with the description by circling the number on the scale following the statement.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. In general, staff are responsible for their jobs.   | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.9em;">Strongly Disagree      Indifferent      Strongly Agree</div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;"> ----- <br/>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</div> |
| 2. There are delegations of authority and staff can exercise their own discretion in daily work. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.9em;">Strongly Disagree      Indifferent      Strongly Agree</div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;"> ----- <br/>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</div> |
| 3. There are channels for subordinates to express their opinions.                                | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.9em;">Strongly Disagree      Indifferent      Strongly Agree</div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;"> ----- <br/>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</div> |
| 4. Opinions expressed by staff are often considered favourably by the management.                | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.9em;">Strongly Disagree      Indifferent      Strongly Agree</div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;"> ----- <br/>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</div> |
| 5. There is a clear organization structure.  | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.9em;">Strongly Disagree      Indifferent      Strongly Agree</div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;"> ----- <br/>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</div> |
| 6. Every person understands his/her own responsibilities and authorities.                        | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.9em;">Strongly Disagree      Indifferent      Strongly Agree</div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;"> ----- <br/>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</div> |
| 7. The management has close supervision in order to ensure the quality of work.                  | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.9em;">Strongly Disagree      Indifferent      Strongly Agree</div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;"> ----- <br/>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</div> |

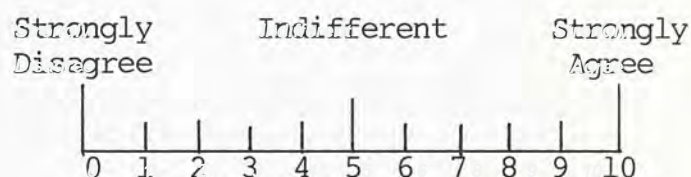


- 2 -

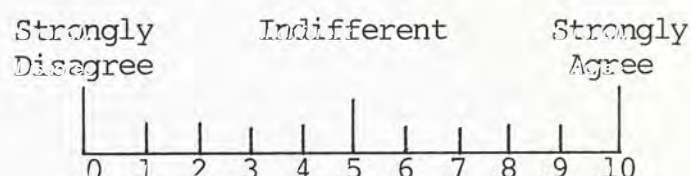
8. There are many rules and regulations to be followed by staff.



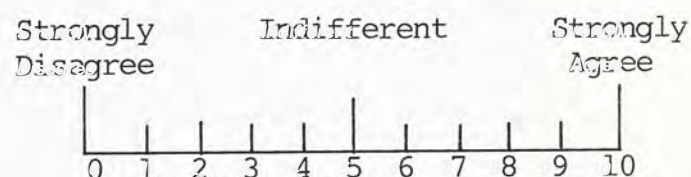
9. Subordinates can obtain trust and support from superiors in carrying out their duties.



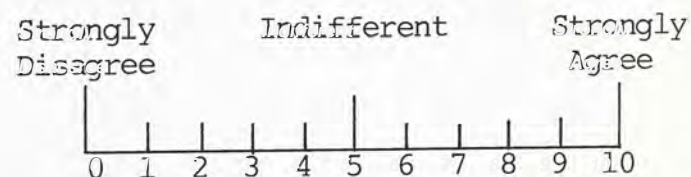
10. Adequate training and staff development have been provided.



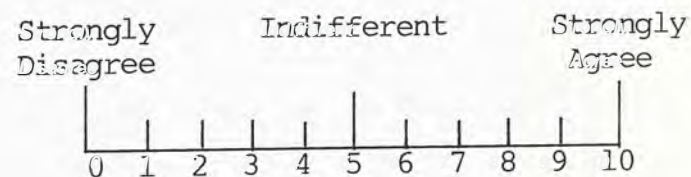
11. Staff are proud to be a member of the firm.



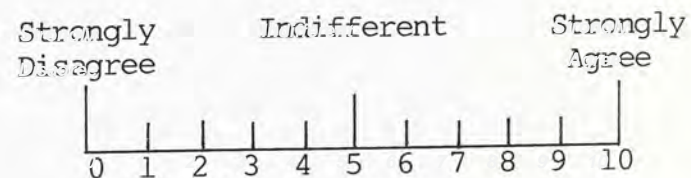
12. The performance-reward system is equitable.



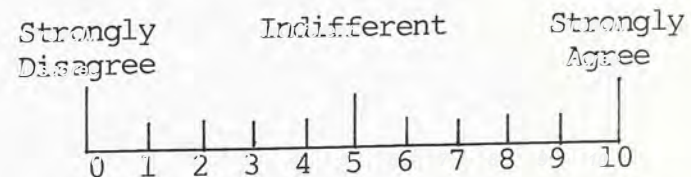
13. The promotion system is objective.



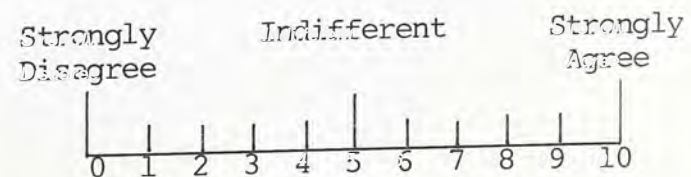
14. The evaluation of performance is based on preset standards and objectives.



15. Different opinions among staff can be discussed openly.



16. Staff are encouraged to speak their mind even if it means disagreeing with their superiors.



17. The firm is aggressive in doing business and staff are encouraged to take risks.

Strongly Disagree

Indifferent

Strongly Agree

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Part B      Your attitude towards your job

The following factors are related to your job, indicate your feelings towards these factors by circling the number on the scale following the factors.

1. Promotion opportunities.

Totally Dissatisfied

Indifferent

Totally Satisfied

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

2. Firm's reputation.

Totally Dissatisfied

Indifferent

Totally Satisfied

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

3. Training and career development.

Totally Dissatisfied

Indifferent

Totally Satisfied

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

4. Authority you can exercise.

Totally Dissatisfied

Indifferent

Totally Satisfied

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

5. Chances to show your ability.

Totally Dissatisfied

Indifferent

Totally Satisfied

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

6. Relationship with your colleagues.

Totally Dissatisfied

Indifferent

Totally Satisfied

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

7. Working hours.

Totally Dissatisfied

Indifferent

Totally Satisfied

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

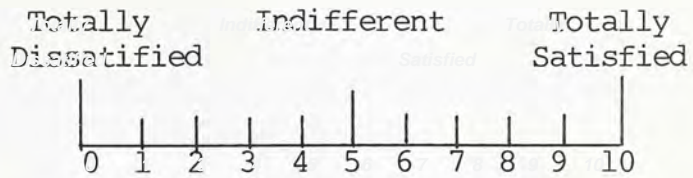
8

9

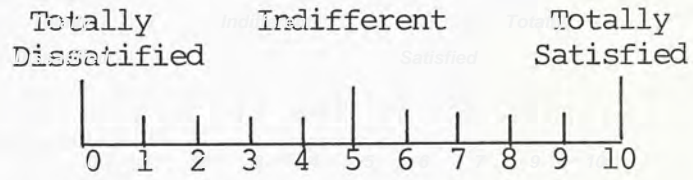
10



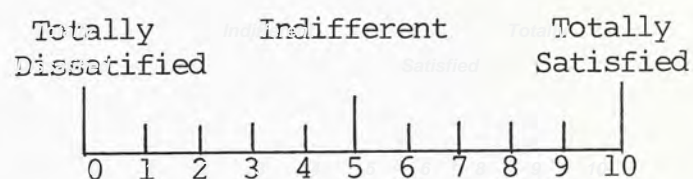
8. Salary and Fringe benefits.



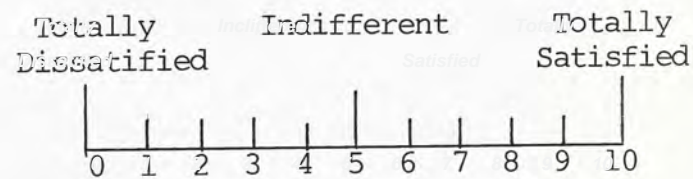
9. Security of the job.



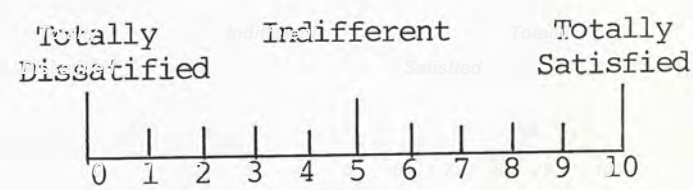
10. Technical support from superiors.



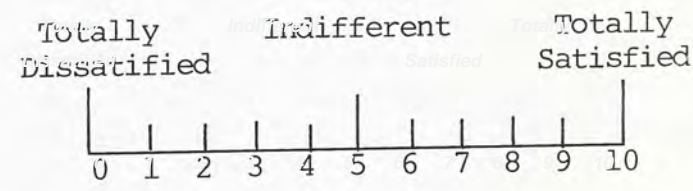
11. Nature of your work.



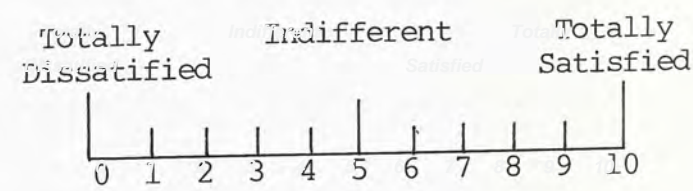
12. Status of the profession.



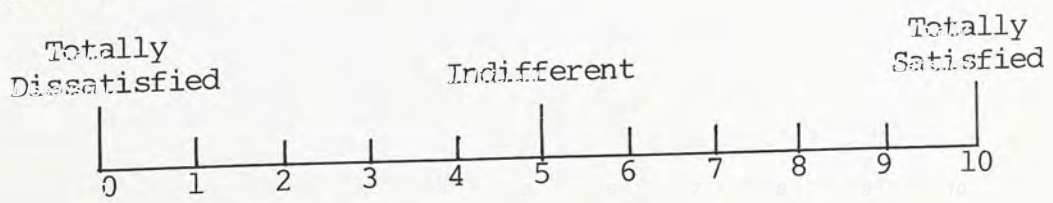
13. Appraisal from the firm.



14. Relations with the Superior.

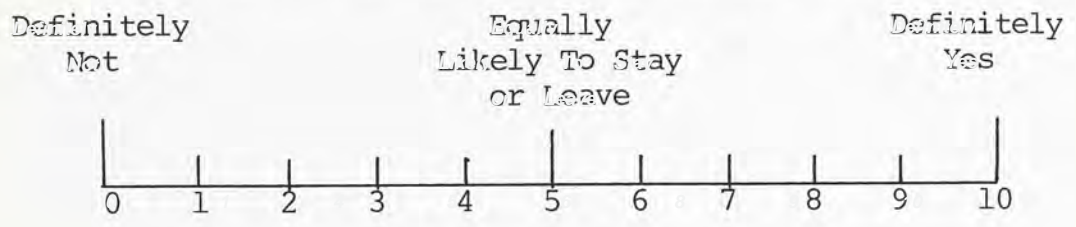


15. Considering all the factors together, to what extent your are satisfied with your present job?



Part C     Your future work plan

1. How likely is it you will still be working in public accounting firms 3 years from now? (Please circle the number of your choice)



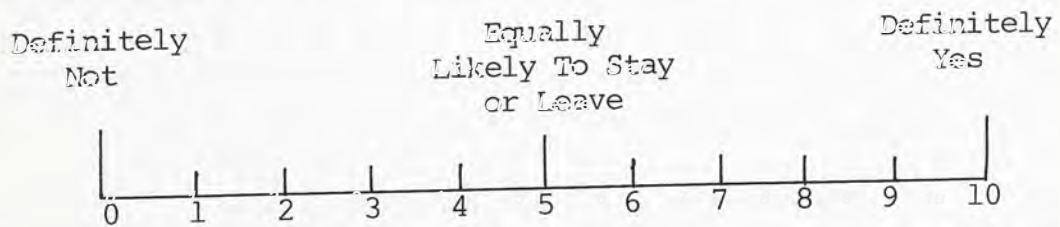
If your rating in question 1 is from 0 to 4, answer the following question. Otherwise GOTO question 3.

2. What would be the possible reasons for you to leave the public accounting firms? (Please tick your reasons, you may choose more than one)

- ☐ Leaving Hong Kong for good.
- ☐ The work in public accounting firms is too demanding.
- ☐ There is limited chance for promotion.
- ☐ The working hours are too long.
- ☐ To get more exposure in commercial sector.
- ☐ To develop career in commercial sector.
- ☐ To earn more money.
- ☐ The organization I work with is too bureaucratic.
- ☐ Others, Please specify \_\_\_\_\_ .

GOTO Part D

3. If your rating in question 1 is from 5 to 10, how likely is it you will still be working with the SAME accounting firm 3 years from now? (Please circle the number of your choice)



4. If your rating in question 3 is from 0 to 4, what would be the possible reasons for you to leave your present firm? (Please tick your reasons, you may choose more than one)

- ☐ Leaving Hong Kong for good.
- ☐ There is limited chance for promotion.
- ☐ The working hours are too long.
- ☐ To earn more money.
- ☐ The organization I work with is too bureaucratic.
- ☐ Others, Please specify \_\_\_\_\_ .



- 6 -

Part D In order to make the research complete, please give me some information about yourself:

Educational background (Please tick one)

Postgraduate	_____
University	_____
Polytechnic or Colleges	_____
Matriculation	_____
Secondary	_____
Others, please specify _____	_____

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sex (Please tick one)                      Male    \_\_\_\_\_    Female    \_\_\_\_\_

Family status (Please tick one)

Single	_____
Married with no children	_____
Married with one child	_____
Married with more than 1 child	_____

Length of service in professional accounting firms \_\_\_\_\_ years

Length of service in your present firms \_\_\_\_\_ years

The present rank (Please tick one)

Partner	_____
Principal (Consultant)	_____
Manager (Assistant manager)	_____
Supervisor	_____
Senior	_____
Semi-senior	_____
Junior	_____
Assistant	_____
Others, please specify _____	_____

\*\*\*\*\*  
 End of Questionnaire  
 THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION  
 \*\*\*\*\*

APPENDIX III

PROFILES OF THE SAMPLES

1. Educational Background

<u>Level</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Postgraduate	1	0.5
University	23	12.0
Polytechnic or Colleges	88	45.8
Matriculation	67	34.9
Secondary	<u>13</u>	<u>6.8</u>
	192	100.0
	===	===

2. Age

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
21	3	1.6
22	21	11.4
23	26	14.1
24	39	21.2
25	33	17.9
26	23	12.5
27	21	11.4
28	6	3.3
29	6	3.3
30 or above	<u>6</u>	<u>3.3</u>
	184	100.0
	===	===

Missing Values = 8.

3. Sex

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Male	114	59.4
Female	<u>78</u>	<u>40.6</u>
	192	100.0
	===	===



4. Family Status

<u>Status</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Single	178	92.7
Married without children	11	5.7
Married with children	<u>3</u>	<u>1.6</u>
	192	100.0
	===	=====

5. Years of Experience

<u>Years</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1-2	114	59.4
3-4	58	30.2
5-6	13	6.8
7 or above	<u>7</u>	<u>3.6</u>
	192	100.0
	===	=====

6. Years of Service in Present Firm

<u>Years</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1-2	122	63.6
3-4	54	28.1
5-6	10	5.2
7 or above	<u>6</u>	<u>3.1</u>
	192	100.0
	===	=====

7. Rank

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Principal & Consultant	1	0.5
Manager	10	5.2
Supervisor	18	9.4
Senior	29	15.1
Semi-senior	44	22.9
Junior & Assistant	<u>90</u>	<u>46.9</u>
	192	100.0
	===	=====

# APPENDIX IV

## CORRELATION AMONG ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE VARIABLES

Correlation Coefficients / Prob > |R| under H<sub>0</sub>: Rho = 0 / N = 192

	RESPON- SIBLE	DISCRE- TION	CHAN- NELS	CONSIDER- ATIONS	STRUCT- URE	UNDER- STANDING
DISCRETION	0.3380 0.0001					
CHANNELS	0.2018 0.0050	0.4287 0.0001				
CONSIDERATIONS	0.2172 0.0025	0.3711 0.0001	0.5609 0.0001			
STRUCTURE	0.3339 0.0001	0.2224 0.0019	0.2316 0.0012	0.2136 0.0029		
UNDERSTANDING	0.3651 0.0001	0.4358 0.0001	0.3325 0.0001	0.3317 0.0001	0.4101 0.0001	
SUPERVISION	0.3467 0.0001	0.2841 0.0001	0.1634 0.0235	0.1459 0.0434	0.3765 0.0001	0.4309 0.0001
REGULATIONS	0.2361 0.0010	-0.0288 0.5921	-0.0178 0.3066	0.0289 0.5904	0.2085 0.0037	0.2542 0.0004
SUPPORT	0.2568 0.0003	0.3369 0.0001	0.3732 0.0001	0.4194 0.0001	0.2132 0.0030	0.3356 0.0001
TRAINING	0.3591 0.0001	0.1959 0.0065	0.2366 0.0010	0.2936 0.0001	0.3521 0.0001	0.3717 0.0001
IDENTIFICATION	0.2423 0.0007	0.2698 0.0002	0.3327 0.0001	0.3134 0.0001	0.2532 0.0004	0.2736 0.0001
REWARD	0.1255 0.0827	0.1405 0.0520	0.1837 0.0108	0.3755 0.0001	0.1150 0.1123	0.2410 0.0008
PROMOTION	0.1874 0.0092	0.2480 0.0005	0.2885 0.0001	0.4527 0.0001	0.1907 0.0081	0.2523 0.0004
STANDARDS	0.2026 0.0048	0.2814 0.0001	0.4189 0.0001	0.4475 0.0001	0.3159 0.0001	0.3925 0.0001
DISCUSSION	0.0842 0.2458	0.3150 0.0001	0.4981 0.0001	0.3757 0.0001	0.0271 0.7092	0.2171 0.0025
CONFLICT	0.2255 0.0017	0.2824 0.0001	0.5059 0.0001	0.4284 0.0001	0.1803 0.0123	0.3105 0.0001
RISK	-0.0365 0.6150	0.1413 0.0506	0.0880 0.2251	0.1477 0.0409	0.0226 0.7554	0.0079 0.9133



CORRELATION AMONG ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE VARIABLES  
(Continued)

Correlation Coefficients / Prob > |R| under H<sub>0</sub>: Rho = 0 / N = 192

	SUPER- VISION	REGUL- ATIONS	SUPPORT	TRAIN- ING	IDENTIF- ICATION	REWARD
REGULATIONS	0.3106 0.0001					
SUPPORT	0.2692 0.0002	0.1095 0.1306				
TRAINING	0.4781 0.0001	0.2886 0.0001	0.3733 0.0001			
IDENTIFICATION	0.2073 0.0039	-0.0424 0.5591	0.2890 0.0001	0.4599 0.0001		
REWARD	0.1796 0.0127	0.0000 1.0000	0.1730 0.0164	0.3603 0.0001	0.6400 0.0001	
PROMOTION	0.2424 0.0007	-0.0050 0.9453	0.3795 0.0001	0.3068 0.0001	0.4834 0.0001	0.6144 0.0001
STANDARDS	0.2205 0.0021	0.0683 0.3468	0.4570 0.0001	0.4144 0.0001	0.4967 0.0001	0.4329 0.0001
DISCUSSION	0.1510 0.0365	-0.0323 0.6561	0.3932 0.0001	0.2632 0.0002	0.3152 0.0001	0.2067 0.0040
CONFLICT	0.2126 0.0031	-0.0608 0.4023	0.4941 0.0001	0.3454 0.0001	0.3480 0.0001	0.2437 0.0007
RISK	0.0953 0.1886	-0.0736 0.3101	0.1127 0.1197	0.0694 0.3391	0.2154 0.0027	0.2337 0.0011
	PROMOT- ION	STAND- ARDS	DISCUSS- ION	CONFLICT		
STANDARDS	0.6213 0.0001					
DISCUSSION	0.3750 0.0001	0.4966 0.0001				
CONFLICT	0.4447 0.0001	0.5082 0.0001	0.6410 0.0001			
RISK	0.2571 0.0003	0.1252 0.0836	0.1515 0.0359	0.2013 0.0051		

## APPENDIX V

## CORRELATIONS AMONG JOB SATISFACTION VARIABLES

Correlation Coefficients / Prob > |R| under H<sub>0</sub>: Rho = 0 / N = 192

	PROMOT- ION	RECOGN- ITION	DEVELOP- MENT	AUTO- NOMY	ABILITY	CO- WORKERS
RECOGNITION	0.3814 0.0001					
DEVELOPMENT	0.4710 0.0001	0.6614 0.0001				
AUTONOMY	0.5080 0.0001	0.3367 0.0001	0.4098 0.0001			
ABILITY	0.3495 0.0001	0.3064 0.0001	0.3911 0.0001	0.5990 0.0001		
CO-WORKERS	0.2657 0.0002	0.1332 0.0556	0.0967 0.1820	0.2552 0.0004	0.1477 0.0410	
CONDITIONS	0.3120 0.0001	-0.0327 0.6521	0.0475 0.5134	0.2200 0.0022	0.0951 0.1896	0.1670 0.0206
PAY	0.5148 0.0001	0.3726 0.0001	0.3896 0.0001	0.3690 0.0001	0.3145 0.0001	-0.0066 0.9280
SECURITY	0.4004 0.0001	0.1821 0.0115	0.2118 0.0032	0.3537 0.0001	0.2501 0.0005	0.2436 0.0007
SUPERVISION-T	0.2988 0.0001	0.4445 0.0001	0.4336 0.0001	0.3445 0.0001	0.2722 0.0001	0.3343 0.0001
WORK NATURE	0.3373 0.0001	0.3499 0.0001	0.4455 0.0001	0.4376 0.0001	0.4142 0.0001	0.1352 0.0516
STATUS	0.2567 0.0003	0.5758 0.0001	0.4571 0.0001	0.3888 0.0001	0.3094 0.0001	0.2046 0.0044
APPRAISAL	0.6023 0.0001	0.4274 0.0001	0.5097 0.0001	0.5554 0.0001	0.4728 0.0001	0.2662 0.0002
SUPERVISORS-R	0.4059 0.0001	0.2227 0.0019	0.1848 0.0103	0.4085 0.0001	0.3369 0.0001	0.5962 0.0001
OVERALL	0.6119 0.0001	0.4563 0.0001	0.4661 0.0001	0.5062 0.0001	0.4153 0.0001	0.3024 0.0001



CORRELATIONS AMONG JOB SATISFACTION VARIABLES  
(Continued)

Correlation Coefficients / Prob > |R| under Ho: Rho = 0 / N = 192

	CONDIT- IONS	PAY	SECUR- ITY	SUPERV- ISION-T	WORK NATURE	STATUS
PAY	0.4847 0.0001					
SECURITY	0.3653 0.0001	0.2990 0.0001				
SUPERVISION-T	0.0758 0.2958	0.2482 0.0005	0.4312 0.0001			
WORK NATURE	0.2026 0.0048	0.3213 0.0001	0.3079 0.0001	0.3965 0.0001		
STATUS	0.1085 0.1343	0.3636 0.0001	0.2614 0.0003	0.4823 0.0001	0.5024 0.0001	
APPRAISAL	0.2754 0.0001	0.5145 0.0001	0.4182 0.0001	0.4227 0.0001	0.4741 0.0001	0.4590 0.0001
SUPERVISORS-R	0.2181 0.0024	0.1965 0.0063	0.4139 0.0001	0.4628 0.0001	0.3326 0.0001	0.3020 0.0001
OVERALL	0.3937 0.0001	0.5602 0.0001	0.5561 0.0001	0.4201 0.0001	0.5180 0.0001	0.5159 0.0001
	APPRAI- SAL	SUPERV- ISORS-R				
SUPERVISORS-R	0.5225 0.0001					
OVERALL	0.5897 0.0001	0.4954 0.0001				

## APPENDIX VI

CORRELATION BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE VARIABLES  
AND JOB SATISFACTION VARIABLES

Correlation Coefficients / Prob &gt; |R| under Ho: Rho = 0 / N = 192

<u>JOB FACTOR</u>	<u>RESPON- SIBLE</u>	<u>DISCRE- TION</u>	<u>CHAN- NELS</u>	<u>CONSIDER- ATIONS</u>	<u>STRUCT- URE</u>	<u>UNDER- STANDING</u>
PROMOTION	0.1095 0.1306	0.1672 0.0205	0.2014 0.0051	0.3986 0.0001	0.2203 0.0021	0.1509 0.0366
RECOGNITION	0.3206 0.0001	0.2756 0.0001	0.2459 0.0006	0.3072 0.0001	0.2575 0.0003	0.2982 0.0001
DEVELOPMENT	0.3114 0.0001	0.1624 0.0244	0.1668 0.0207	0.2908 0.0001	0.3168 0.0001	0.3090 0.0001
AUTONOMY	0.2128 0.0030	0.3109 0.0001	0.2462 0.0006	0.3222 0.0001	0.1271 0.0791	0.2372 0.0009

<u>JOB FACTOR</u>	<u>SUPER- VISION</u>	<u>REGUL- ATIONS</u>	<u>SUPPORT</u>	<u>TRAIN- ING</u>	<u>IDENTIF- ICATION</u>	<u>REWARD</u>
PROMOTION	0.1583 0.0284	-0.1386 0.0553	0.2277 0.0015	0.2950 0.0001	0.4331 0.0001	0.4769 0.0001
RECOGNITION	0.2329 0.0012	0.1475 0.0412	0.3548 0.0001	0.4797 0.0001	0.6037 0.0001	0.3648 0.0001
DEVELOPMENT	0.3423 0.0001	0.1189 0.1006	0.3399 0.0001	0.7571 0.0001	0.5252 0.0001	0.3955 0.0001
AUTONOMY	0.1395 0.0537	-0.0030 0.9575	0.3736 0.0001	0.3183 0.0001	0.2956 0.0001	0.2966 0.0001

<u>JOB FACTOR</u>	<u>PROMOT- ION</u>	<u>STAND- ARDS</u>	<u>DISCUSS- ION</u>	<u>CONFLICT</u>	<u>RISK</u>
PROMOTION	0.6083 0.0001	0.4483 0.0001	0.3133 0.0001	0.2745 0.0001	0.2326 0.0012
RECOGNITION	0.3670 0.0001	0.4280 0.0001	0.2647 0.0002	0.3503 0.0001	0.0963 0.1838
DEVELOPMENT	0.3381 0.0001	0.4239 0.0001	0.2276 0.0015	0.3530 0.0001	0.0608 0.4022
AUTONOMY	0.3877 0.0001	0.3694 0.0001	0.2826 0.0001	0.3934 0.0001	0.1210 0.0947



CORRELATION BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE VARIABLES  
AND JOB SATISFACTION VARIABLES  
(Continued)

Correlation Coefficients / Prob > |R| under Ho: Rho = 0 / N = 192

<u>JOB FACTOR</u>	<u>RESPON- SIBLE</u>	<u>DISCRE- TION</u>	<u>CHAN- NELS</u>	<u>CONSIDER- ATIONS</u>	<u>STRUCT- URE</u>	<u>UNDER- STANDING</u>
ABILITY	0.1195 0.0986	0.1573 0.0293	0.2581 0.0003	0.2610 0.0003	0.1884 0.0089	0.2327 0.0012
CO-WORKERS	0.1214 0.0935	0.2231 0.0019	0.2914 0.0001	0.2622 0.0002	0.0900 0.2148	0.2572 0.0003
CONDITIONS	-0.1140 0.1155	0.1361 0.0598	0.2039 0.0046	0.2382 0.0009	-0.1256 0.0826	-0.0119 0.8701
PAY	0.0646 0.3731	0.1633 0.0236	0.2489 0.0005	0.3589 0.0001	0.0660 0.3634	0.1318 0.0685

<u>JOB FACTOR</u>	<u>SUPER- VISION</u>	<u>REGUL- ATIONS</u>	<u>SUPPORT</u>	<u>TRAIN- ING</u>	<u>IDENTIF- ICATION</u>	<u>REWARD</u>
ABILITY	0.1758 0.0148	0.1930 0.0073	0.2586 0.0003	0.3393 0.0001	0.3112 0.0001	0.2633 0.0002
CO-WORKERS	0.0323 0.2566	0.0905 0.2117	0.3352 0.0001	0.1356 0.0607	0.0365 0.6155	-0.0260 0.7205
CONDITIONS	-0.0835 0.2497	-0.2323 0.0012	0.0702 0.3334	-0.0294 0.6858	0.2367 0.0009	0.3894 0.0001
PAY	0.0521 0.4731	-0.1480 0.0405	0.2051 0.0043	0.2766 0.0001	0.5885 0.0001	0.7232 0.0001

<u>JOB FACTOR</u>	<u>PROMOT- ION</u>	<u>STAND- ARDS</u>	<u>DISCUSS- ION</u>	<u>CONFLICT</u>	<u>RISK</u>
ABILITY	0.2587 0.0003	0.3184 0.0001	0.1695 0.0187	0.2230 0.0019	0.1703 0.0182
CO-WORKERS	0.3171 0.0001	0.3082 0.0001	0.3055 0.0001	0.2490 0.0005	0.0925 0.2021
CONDITIONS	0.3735 0.0001	0.2641 0.0002	0.2158 0.0027	0.1719 0.0171	0.0915 0.2067
PAY	0.4713 0.0001	0.3710 0.0001	0.2130 0.0030	0.2865 0.0001	0.2818 0.0001

CORRELATION BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE VARIABLES  
AND JOB SATISFACTION VARIABLES  
(Continued)

Correlation Coefficients / Prob > |R| under Ho: Rho = 0 / N = 192

<u>JOB FACTOR</u>	<u>RESPON-</u> <u>SIBLE</u>	<u>DISCRE-</u> <u>TION</u>	<u>CHAN-</u> <u>NELS</u>	<u>CONSIDER-</u> <u>RATIONS</u>	<u>STRUCT-</u> <u>URE</u>	<u>UNDER-</u> <u>STANDING</u>
SECURITY	0.0404 0.5781	0.1417 0.0499	0.1843 0.0105	0.2367 0.0009	-0.0020 0.9779	0.1039 0.1515
SUPERVISION-T	0.2164 0.0026	0.1680 0.0198	0.2223 0.0019	0.2324 0.0012	0.1448 0.0450	0.3000 0.0001
WORK NATURE	0.2353 0.0001	0.2680 0.0002	0.1766 0.0143	0.2769 0.0001	0.1757 0.0148	0.2491 0.0005
STATUS	0.2901 0.0001	0.3568 0.0001	0.2450 0.0006	0.2819 0.0001	0.1535 0.0335	0.3351 0.0001

<u>JOB FACTOR</u>	<u>SUPER-</u> <u>VISION</u>	<u>REGUL-</u> <u>ATIONS</u>	<u>SUPPORT</u>	<u>TRAIN-</u> <u>ING</u>	<u>IDENTIF-</u> <u>ICATION</u>	<u>REWARD</u>
SECURITY	-0.0007 0.9922	-0.0631 0.3843	0.1389 0.0087	0.1906 0.0081	0.2220 0.0020	0.2804 0.0001
SUPERVISION-T	0.3410 0.0001	0.1196 0.0986	0.4553 0.0001	0.4397 0.0001	0.4157 0.0001	0.2604 0.0003
WORK NATURE	0.2753 0.0001	0.1448 0.0451	0.2521 0.0004	0.4373 0.0001	0.3673 0.0001	0.3481 0.0001
STATUS	0.2576 0.0003	0.0193 0.7901	0.4112 0.0001	0.4077 0.0001	0.4755 0.0001	0.3168 0.0001

<u>JOB FACTOR</u>	<u>PROMOT-</u> <u>ION</u>	<u>STAND-</u> <u>ARDS</u>	<u>DISCUSS-</u> <u>ION</u>	<u>CONFLICT</u>	<u>RISK</u>
SECURITY	0.3510 0.0001	0.2056 0.0042	0.2094 0.0036	0.1701 0.0183	0.1847 0.0103
SUPERVISION-T	0.4114 0.0001	0.3506 0.0001	0.2875 0.0001	0.3658 0.0001	0.1776 0.0137
WORK NATURE	0.3626 0.0001	0.3374 0.0001	0.2531 0.0004	0.3100 0.0001	0.1031 0.1549
STATUS	0.3533 0.0001	0.3762 0.0001	0.3236 0.0001	0.3928 0.0001	0.1384 0.0556



CORRELATION BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE VARIABLES  
AND JOB SATISFACTION VARIABLES  
(Continued)

Correlation Coefficients / Prob > |R| under H<sub>0</sub>: Rho = 0 / N = 192

<u>JOB FACTOR</u>	<u>RESPON- SIBLE</u>	<u>DISCRE- TION</u>	<u>CHAN- NELS</u>	<u>CONSIDER- ATIONS</u>	<u>STRUCT- URE</u>	<u>UNDER- STANDING</u>
APPRAISAL	0.2288 0.0014	0.2477 0.0005	0.3826 0.0001	0.5303 0.0001	0.1971 0.0061	0.3375 0.0001
SUPERVISORS-R	0.0930 0.1994	0.2211 0.0021	0.3711 0.0001	0.3718 0.0001	0.0614 0.3978	0.2485 0.0005
OVERALL	0.1752 0.0151	0.3134 0.0001	0.2844 0.0001	0.4117 0.0001	0.1007 0.1648	0.2780 0.0001

<u>JOB FACTOR</u>	<u>SUPER- VISION</u>	<u>REGUL- ATIONS</u>	<u>SUPPORT</u>	<u>TRAIN- ING</u>	<u>IDENTIF- ICATION</u>	<u>REWARD</u>
APPRAISAL	0.2096 0.0035	0.0480 0.5086	0.3247 0.0001	0.3979 0.0001	0.4946 0.0001	0.5400 0.0001
SUPERVISORS-R	0.0809 0.2645	0.1052 0.1463	0.3773 0.0001	0.1481 0.0404	0.1805 0.0123	0.1700 0.0184
OVERALL	0.1539 0.0331	-0.0834 0.2503	0.3172 0.0001	0.3313 0.0001	0.5120 0.0001	0.5460 0.0001

<u>JOB FACTOR</u>	<u>PROMOT- ION</u>	<u>STAND- ARDS</u>	<u>DISCUSS- ION</u>	<u>CONFLICT</u>	<u>RISK</u>
APPRAISAL	0.5511 0.0001	0.5118 0.0001	0.2870 0.0001	0.3370 0.0001	0.1296 0.0793
SUPERVISORS-R	0.4870 0.0001	0.4339 0.0001	0.3618 0.0001	0.2948 0.0001	0.1491 0.0391
OVERALL	0.5702 0.0001	0.4085 0.0001	0.3295 0.0001	0.3030 0.0001	0.2764 0.0001

APPENDIX VII  
REASONS FOR LEAVING

(a) Those who are less likely to stay in Public Practice

Number of Samples = 93

<u>Reasons</u>	<u>Number of responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Leaving Hong Kong for good	18	19.35
The work in public accounting firms is too demanding	42	45.16
There is limited chance for promotion	30	32.26
The working hours are too long	60	64.52
To get more exposure in commercial sector	52	55.91
To develop career in commercial sector	55	59.14
To earn more money	57	61.29
The organization I work with is too bureaucratic	24	25.81
Other reasons:		
Further study		
To get married		

(b) Those who are more likely to stay in Public Practice

Number of Samples = 99

Number of samples who are more likely to stay in present firm = 78  
Number of samples who are less likely to stay in present firm = 21

<u>Reasons</u>	<u>Number of responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Leaving Hong Kong for good	12	57.14
There is limited chance for promotion	9	42.85
The working hours are too long	7	33.33
To earn more money	10	47.62
The organization I work with is too bureaucratic	3	14.28
Other reasons:		
To start own accounting firm		



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